

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Personnel

WHILE all this was in progress in the Spring of 1829 among the pioneers who had ventured into this valley lured by possibilities of development, private enterprise or having been sent here by the canal company, there was a group of men strong in the belief of the Presbyterian faith! Churchmen in the localities from which they had come. As they listened to the tales of adventure in these woodlands, they realized that in the fast growing settlement there was need of a church and the religious background that only an established church can furnish.

Conspicuous in this group were Mr. Sylvanus Jessup, a contractor from Deer Park, N. Y.; Mr. Samuel Hodgdon, from Montrose, and the settlement's physician, Dr. Thomas Sweet, who for two years had been the only practitioner in all this region and who had but recently moved here from his native home, Harford.

These gentlemen, with others, particularly some associated with the control of the mining activities, discussed the possibility of the establishment of a church here and "accordingly made inquiries."

At that time both Harford and Montrose belonged to the Susquehanna Presbytery, so with that presbytery both Mr. Hodgdon and Dr. Sweet were familiar.

Mr. Jessup's attention turned toward New York State and the men associated with the company naturally thought of a point along the canal route between its terminus and the Hudson River and so came the suggestion of The Hudson Presbytery. An appeal to the presbytery was made on June 4, 1829, and as quickly as mails permitted in those days of horseback delivery, a response was received saying the Rev. Joel Campbell of the Hudson Presbytery (probably of Newburgh) would come to help establish a church in the new settlement known by this time as Carbondale instead of Barrendale. The selection of this name is credited to Washington Irving, then a member of the Board of Managers of the Canal Company. On Saturday, June 27, Rev. Joel Campbell arrived, undoubtedly by canal